

PEACE, NOT WAR, THE SCHOOL OF HEROISM

JENKIN LLOYD JONES, LL. D.



30 NORTH LASALLE STREET
CHICAGO

**Press of
Ernest Morehouse
Chicago**

PEACE, NOT WAR, THE SCHOOL OF HEROISM

BY

JENKIN LLOYD JONES, LL. D.

[An address delivered before the Fourth American Peace Congress
at St. Louis, Missouri, May 1, 1913.]

"I should hate to raise a 'sissy' boy. I rebuke my little son when he comes home with a bruised face and a torn shirt, but at the same time I secretly admire him," said a "new mother" to me recently. Though admitting all the arguments, economic, civic, social, ethical and religious, against perpetuating the barbarities of war, she yet had a lurking dread of disarmament lest there might go out of life certain heroisms and a chivalric valor so dear to a woman's heart and so essential to the life of the nation and the progress of civilization. This up-to-date mother only echoed the more open masculine protest against the peace movement which comes from certain quarters. These latest philosophers of vehemence and violence assume that a certain amount of slaughter is necessary in order to keep up the vigor of the blood and the virility of the race. Let me not overstate or misrepresent. Is it this? A certain amount of preparation for war, a certain willingness and readiness to kill innocent people on occasion, is the sign and condition of individual and national virility. It is assumed that a certain chesty strut, a disciplined swagger, a pugilistic training, is necessary in that school of valor which makes patriots and valiant twentieth century gospelers. "Muscular Christianity" is a fetching phrase on the lips of those who would establish the field of Mars within hearing of cathedral bells, in order that the Christ may be adequately glorified and the Christian Bible be sped on its way to heathen lands, whither it must be sent, if need be, out of a cannon's mouth, and its landing-place protected by pious bayonets.

To represent an imaginary pale-faced, white-livered, nerveless product of the non-military spirit, the ill-starred and well-nigh forgotten word, "mollycoddle" has been rescued from the linguistic junk-heap. Let it be frankly admitted that drum and fife, gold lace, brass buttons, cockades and sword on thigh still stir the blood of poet and preacher, as well as of the sentimental maid who "dotes on the soldier" and lays aside her coyness in the presence of such valor. Who so fit as a soldier to guard her honor and to champion her cause! The parks, even of our pacific United States, are made resplendent with monumental bronzes of men who wore epaulettes. Even in the Statuary Hall at Washington, where each State in the Union is permitted to present in effigy two of its most famous and beloved representatives, perhaps a majority of the figures are buttoned, sashed, belted, and spurred for the fray.

Now it is growing more and more patent to the student that all this glorification of war as a school of heroism, a training-ground of the spirit, is unwarranted by history, by a profounder psychology, and a franker study of individual experience. Far be it from me to begrudge the soldier his due. I believe Ruskin is right when he says: "The disposition of human nature to honor the man with a sword arises not from the fact that he is prepared to kill, but that he is prepared to die for a cause."

With this admission, it is still true that it is much easier to die bravely than to live worthily for a cause. Many a man who has carried the bayonet with honor has disgraced himself with the ballot. There are those in this presence who with myself have followed men confidently on the battle-line whom we distrusted and in whose ranks we would have been ashamed to be found on election day.

"So he died for his faith. That is fine—
More than most of us do.
But stay, can you add to that line
That he lived for it, too?"

"It is easy to die. Men have died
For a wish or a whim—
From bravado or passion or pride.
Was it harder for him?"

"But to live; every day to live out
All the truth that he dreamt,
While his friends met his conduct with doubt
And the world with contempt—
"Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
Never turning aside?
Then we'll talk of the life that he led—
Never mind how he died."

Robert Browning, in "A Soul's Tragedy," hints in terser phrase at the fine heroism which is taught in the every-day school of common life and most successfully demonstrated far from the music of drum and fife and where there are no regimental guidons to show the way. When the shout of the crowd grows nearer and nearer, the bumptious reformer and valiant champion of the people, Chiappino, exclaims:

"How the people tarry!
I can't be silent; I must speak; or sing—
How natural to sing now!"

But Eulalia, all unconscious of any valor, touched the finer heroism when she said:

"Hush and pray!
We are to die; but even I perceive
'Tis not a very hard thing so to die.
My cousin of the pale-blue tearful eyes,
Poor Cesca, suffers more from one day's life
With the stern husband; Tisbe's heart goes forth
Each evening after that wild son of hers,
To track his thoughtless footsteps through the streets;
How easy for them both to die like this!
I am not sure that I could live as they."

This is poetry and may be distrusted, but the sad prose sequel of this drama strikes a home truth and dispels the glamor of the military that has distorted the spiritual vision of men and women through the weary centuries. He, the "champion of the people," who courted the privilege of dying for them, when he found that his right to strike the decisive blow was denied him sneaked out of the Northwest gate, while the unctuous functionary says:

"Give thanks to God, the keys of the Provost's palace
to me, and yourselves to profitable meditation at home!
I have known four-and-twenty leaders of revolts."

Indeed not until the painted mask of war is torn off, not until the delusions of the parade ground are overcome, not

until the false romance of the battlefield, where men die gladly cheering the flag, fades away, and we hear the groans and not the cheering and see the writhing of mangled forms, shall we come upon the real heroism of war itself. All honor to the captains who have moved battalions and directed campaigns, but more honor to the more numerous hosts that, uncaptured, walked their lonely beats at midnight, fighting back the forces of fatigue and the insidious approaches of sleep. O, it is not hard to withstand a tangible "enemy," to stay where you are placed or to go where you are directed, but it is hard to stand when there is nothing to fight but discouragement, no foe but disease, no enemy but loneliness. Many a pair of knees have done valiant service in the charge that have trembled in shameful imbecility on picket. Not the enemy in the rifle-pits but famine and disease are the grimmest foes that the soldier must face. Take for this the word of a private soldier who spent three of the most precious years of his life on the firing line. Wounds and the suffering of the hospital were trifling sources of discouragement when compared with bad rations, the mud and humiliation that we had to wade through with profane and coarse companionship, and oftentimes after drinking and swaggering leaders we could not respect.

Let the heroism displayed at Vicksburg, Lookout Mountain, Gettysburg and the Wilderness be honored, but let the highest tribute be reserved for those who successfully fought the harder battle with mosquitoes, malaria, extorting sutlers and carousing officers. He who charged the battery did well, but he who kept his tongue unsullied by coarseness and his hands free from the temptation of the dice and the whisky canteen did better. He who fought and won promotion did well, but he who held his place in the rear rank without hope of honor or dream of fame did better still. Said Margaret J. Preston,

"Only a private—it matters not
That I did my duty well,
That all through a score of battles I fought,
And then, like a soldier, fell.
The country I died for, never will heed
My unrequited claim;
And History cannot record the deed,
For she never has heard my name."

The real conquerors on the battlefield and elsewhere are the self-conquerors. No armed forces like the hosts of selfishness and the divinest conquests are those which put indolence underfoot and rout the forces of idleness. These opportunities are not confined to the uniformed ranks. Many a soldier faced unflinchingly the cannon's mouth and perhaps placed his country's flag upon the enemy's rampart, but came home debauched in personal habits to trail the flag he had vindicated on the battlefield in the dust and intrigue of political and partisan trickery.

After all, we have overestimated the significance of the valor of the soldier. The hardest and highest triumphs are those won over prosperity, not over adversity; those which compel the resources of intelligence and wealth to serve the cause of humanity. Life is once and forever a battle, and there are no gains that come without struggle.

The inspiration of the man with a musket is always inferior to the inspiration of the man with a principle. Women who in war days tore their garments into lint now dare not sacrifice a single napkin of the proprieties to bandage the mangled spirits of those who go forth in search of truth and justice. Beautiful are the lives of those who decide that men must be free from the slavery of the body, but nobler are those who valorously wage the war against spiritual slavery and moral bondage.

On Decoration Day we lay our brightest flowers on the cenotaph that represents the unmounded graves of those whose bones fertilize the soil whereon they fell. But there are always heroisms beyond the achievements of the battlefield. A South Carolina wife told me that her husband, a major in Lee's army at Appomattox, retired into the woods on hearing of the surrender, ran his sword into the ground and broke it off at the hilt. He returned to the camp with the handle only, declaring that no Yankee should ever receive his surrendered weapon. He arrived just in time to hear the terms of the capitulation, saying that "all officers would be allowed to retain their side-arms." The valor of the soldier was not equal to the exigencies of the man in this case. Not so with the resources of his great captain. The military record of Robert E. Lee as commander-in-chief of the army of the Confederacy pales in significance and power with the more

heroic civic record, the post-bellum achievement of Robert E. Lee as president of a dismantled university. He scored his highest triumph when he said, "I have given four years of my life to leading the youths of Virginia to battle and to death. I want to give the remaining years of my life to teaching the youths of Virginia how to live."

No less pacific were the final triumphs of his great competitor on the battlefield. Grant's achievements as a soldier were great. His place as a field marshal is safe in the annals of war, but his proudest achievements were in the non-martial triumphs at Vicksburg when he paroled on their individual honor thirty thousand hunger-wasted private soldiers, at Appomattox when he said, "Let the soldiers keep their horses, they will need them to put in the corn," and at Mount McGregor, where he worked insistently with unflagging courage to complete that marvelous narrative that would restore the financial credit of his name and provide for his family, while the terrible cancer-scorpion was tearing his throat. It silenced his voice but it could not break the will or confine the mind.

This higher valor of Lee and Grant may be exceptional in the annals of war, but it is a commonplace in the annals of peace. That human nature is made of such heroic stuff as this is verified every day in shop and field, in home and office, in the kitchen and the schoolroom.

I once sat beside a dying soldier at Nashville while he dictated to me his last words to the wife of his bosom and the mother of his children. He grieved over the forty acres in the backwoods of Wisconsin, over which hung the threatening mortgage. He regretted that the clearing he had left was so small, "but say to her," he said, "that I hope she will be able to hold the forty. It may help raise the children." Twenty years after that, at a reunion of the "old boys," a poor, prematurely old, shabbily dressed woman sought me. Her hands were horny, her steps faltering and uncertain. She was very conscious of the old-fashioned bonnet she wore. With tearless eyes and unmusical voice she said: "I am Bradley Benson's wife. I have come to tell you that I have kept the forty, but I do not know as I have done well," and turning to the unkempt, physically robust, but mentally untrained youth by her side, she added, "This is Bradley's oldest son.

He has helped me. He has been a good boy, but he has had no schooling and he feels it now." Bradley Benson's grave has a marble marker in the National Cemetery at Nashville, and on each return of Decoration Day his country's flag is renewed and flowers are laid upon his grave. Another twenty years and more have fled since I met his widow. Her body in all probability has found rest in some obscure corner of a Wisconsin graveyard, and the forty acres in the woods have probably passed into other hands. It is not likely that even a flag marks her grave, or that flowers decorate it. But I submit that the heroism of his wife makes pale the heroism of Bradley Benson, and the self-sacrifice and devotion of the boy who stood by his mother and grappled with the forest in the interest of young brothers and sisters indicates as fine and high a spirit as was ever achieved by the father.

Sixty-one thousand, three hundred and sixty-two soldiers of the northern army gave up their lives on the battlefield for the Union. Only a few more than three thousand of them bore commissions. Bradley Benson was of the non-commissioned kind. Three hundred and eighteen thousand, eight hundred and seventy bodies are gathered into the national cemeteries guarded by the Union, nearly one-half of them occupying unnamed graves. Bradley Benson won a tombstone with a name, but the wife represents that immeasurably larger army that fought the higher battles and displayed the nobler fortitude, and that army is still full of brave women, heroic wives who bear on their shoulders the burdens of two, and are still enduring the suffering that can be relieved only by the death that comes with all too tardy feet.

Other speakers at this conference will expose the wicked waste of the material resources of the world upon the useless enginery of death. Others still will lead us in a lament over the misdirected energies of mind and body upon the arts of destruction and the costly mechanisms whose highest justification is that they will never be used. Let the lament be loud and clear until the crowned heads of Europe and the cabinets of all the republics of the world shall hear it and take note and hasten to put an end to the horrible scandal. But it is for me to protest against war and war-like attitudes, to protest against the military preparation which a sentimental

and conventional philosophy, aye, even a blind and faithless Christianity, suggest and commend as peace measures. I protest because of their awful distortions of the moral perspective, the hardening of hearts and the confusion of conscience.

There is a new heroism coming that will give to the "new mother," whose words I have quoted, a confidence in the aspirations of peace and a new zeal in fostering the ideals that will bring her boy home with unmarred face and with untorn shirt because he has led a life so valiant, practiced a courage so conquering that he never had an insult to resent or an assailant to defend himself against. "Never strike first but never run away when struck. If you are in the right defend yourself," is the revised gospel of the "new mother," a type of which I met in Texas the other day. But what of the ever-increasing army of supple, bright-eyed, lithe-limbed boys and girls who so live that no indignities come, who so conduct their lives that they need neither strike back nor run away? There are thousands of such in the public schools of America today. It is the bully that needs must defend himself. The braggart must either fight or run away. It is the man with a pistol that gets shot. He who goes armed invites danger and is specially menaced. The man who is forever guarding his honor is in danger of being entrapped into many dishonorable deeds, and the pistol carried by such a man generally goes off at the wrong time, in the wrong place, and hits the wrong person. And what is true of individuals is increasingly true of nations.

Was Jesus a sentimentalist when he said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God"? Which of the two was the more valiant in Gethsemane, he who drew his sword and cut off Malchus' ear, or he who said, "Peter, put up thy sword"?

The poets are singing of this new heroism, a new valor that is inspiring, a new standard of courage. Rudyard Kipling, the poet laureate of the camp, the jingo singer of the British lion, broke through all the conventions and for a moment caught the true spiritual perspective when he sang of the Regimental Water Carrier:

"'E was white, clear white, inside
When he went to tend the wounded under fire!

* * * * *

"I shan't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should'a'been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my head,
An' he plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf a pint of water-green:

* * * * *

"'E carried me away
To where a dooli lay,
An' a bullet came and drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died,
'I 'ope you liked your drink,' sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
At the place where 'e is gone—
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!"

John Hay was confidential secretary to the tender-hearted Lincoln; he was the far-seeing statesman in the chair of the Secretary of State under McKinley. He justified the confidence of these presidents by the ethical vision that made Jim Bludso the hero of the Prairie Belle when she "burnt a hole in the night:"

"Through the hot black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

"He weren't no saint—but at jedgment
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a going to be too hard
On a man that died for men."

In more elegant phrase Whittier discovered the higher patriotism, revealed the inspiration which outreaches the farthest limit of camp and war, in the story of Conductor Bradley, whose "crushed and mangled frame"

"Sank with the brake he grasped just where he stood
To do the utmost that a brave man could,
And die, if needful, as a true man should.

"Men stooped above him; women dropped their tears
On that poor wreck beyond all hopes or fears,
Lost in the strength and glory of his years.

"What heard they? Lo! the ghastly lips of pain,
Dead to all thought save duty's moved again:
'Put out the signals for the other train!"

* * * * *

"Nay, the lost life *was* saved. He is not dead
Who in his record still the earth shall tread
With God's clear aureole shining round his head.
We bow as in the dust, with all our pride
Of virtue dwarfed the noble deed beside.
God give us grace to live as Bradley died!"

War the nursery of heroism? The camp the school of nobility and fortitude? The soldier the type of noble manhood? Is the soldier alone self-reliant in times of temptation,

of battleships and the awful ghastliness of war. defender of woman's honor and children's rights? All the pages of history cry out against this ethical distortion and spiritual blindness. As we climb the mount of self-sacrifice into the realm where saints dwell and saviors are discovered, we get away from the strutting peacocks of the parade, the noisy excitements of the uniformed ranks, the grim science of battleships and the awful ghastliness of war.

"A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway trod,—
Some call it consecration,
And others call it God."

Surely Milton was right when he said, "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." Would you give your boy the most inspiring hero stories of today? Tell him the stories of Craig and Ross, who gave up their lives in Cuba that the ghastly yellow fever might be disarmed. Tell him of that young rector in New Orleans who, when the storm had again overflowed the cisterns and filled the streets with water, giving new life to the insidious mosquito, rallied his forces again under the motto, "Wear a flower in your button-hole and a smile on your face and go to work again." Tell him of Billy Rugh of Gary, the poor crippled newsboy who gave the skin from his own limb to save the life of a young woman whom he had never known, the sweetheart of another. The sweetheart lived but the boy died. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Tell your boy of the wireless operator in mid-ocean who flashes into space his C. Q. D. while the ship is sinking. Tell him of the "hello girl" at the switchboard in the upper story who sends the message that outspeeds Paul Revere—"The dam is broken, flee for your lives," while the devastating current is sweeping beneath her own feet. Tell your boy the story of Captain Scott, writing away with his frozen hand on the record of the brave triumph that overcame the dismal solitudes of the South Pole—writing and writing to his death.

Tell your boy of that brave comrade of Commander Scott who said, "I am going to take a little walk," as he passed out of the tent, knowing he would never return, that the scanty supply might go the farther in sustaining the remnant of that brave band in the Antarctic desolation.

War itself is becoming ashamed of its goriness. Its noblest pride and justification lie in the haste with which it is seeking to ameliorate the atrocities, to eliminate the brutalities. But no refinements or ameliorations will remove the primal outrage of war and make it other than what the great general said it was—"Hell"—Hell, deep-dyed, devilish, damnable in its methods and in its effect. War is now as it always has been, ghoulish, barbaric, brutal, justified in the annals of the brute, but to be outgrown by the human. The bullet and the bayonet are the prolongations of the fang and the horn and like them they are to be outgrown or destroyed on the upper branches of the trees of life. War and barbarism are congenial comrades, but war and civilization are incompatible, and to destroy the first is the highest function of the second. You cannot make hell other than it is by improving the ventilation or introducing patent dampers in the furnace.

Peace, the fostering ground for "mollycoddles?" Heaven save the mark! You need but read the daily dispatches as they have been coming from the cyclone-swept districts of Omaha and the flooded territories of Dayton and Columbus, to note that the inspirations of courage are near the fireside, on the farm, in the shop, in the study and in the laboratory, among the white-handed as well as the hard-handed men of toil.

Right never has been and never will be settled by might. Two wrongs will not make a right between nations any more than between individuals.

In Aristophanes' drama of Peace he describes Tygaeus, a rustic patriot, weary of the awful wastes of the Peloponnesian war, mounting on the back of a beetle into heaven, hoping there to find the Goddess of Peace and to invoke her service. But he found instead the fierce god of war, while Peace was confined in a dungeon beneath the feet of War, the lid held down by heavy stones. The indomitable patriot fastens a rope to the lid and tries to rally a force to lay hold

of the rope, uncover the dungeon and restore Peace to her supremacy. But the gods were busy with other tasks. The spear-makers and the retailers of shields refused to lay hold because they looked for larger sales. Those who wished to be generals would not assist. The combatants fell to quarreling with each other and pulled in opposite directions. Lamachus, in full array, sought to dissuade those who would release Peace. At last, in his despair, he appealed to a band of husbandmen, and these lusty toilers of the field, humble men of the soil, laid hold and the cover was lifted and Peace was released from her confinement. The city rejoiced in the happy restoration, but the crest-makers, the makers of javelins and the sword-cutters were sullen and silent, while the sickle-makers rejoiced over the spear-makers and Trygaeus cheered the farmers, crying: "Depart as quickly as possible to the fields with your instruments of husbandry. Go without spear and sword and javelin. Go every one of you to work in the field." Having sung the paean, the chorus, speaking for the husbandmen, chants: "O day longed for by the just, with delight I get to my vines. I find my fig trees, which a long time ago I planted."

So must we turn to the humble toilers of the field, the home-makers, the ever-diligent housewives, the mothers of men, the obscure men of science, the peaceful men of God, for that heroism that is above war, independent of its inspirations, an antidote to its devastations, an emancipator of its slaves. This higher heroism will enable even military men to sleep untroubled by fitful dreams of invading enemies pouncing upon our unsuspecting Republic some dark night from the East or from the West. For he is doubly armed who is armed with righteousness.

